

## OPPOSITION TO SOVIET SCHEMES

was violent. The unfortunate pilgrim was accused of sacrilege, dragged before a local religious judge, summarily tried, and promptly beheaded *in* the presence of his despairing wife. When the news reached Teheran in January, 1911, indignation was wide-spread among both the Iranian press and Shiite clera<sup>^</sup>. Anatolian Isfahan:, one of the leading dignitaries of the Saiite hierarchy, appealed directly to the Shah for protection of the Iranian faithful. Consequently the Iranian Ambassador in Cairo was instructed to lodge a strong protest with, the Saudi Arabian government and ask for indemnity as well as for adequate guarantees against the repetition of similar incidents.

Throughout this period the Shia dignitaries maintained a Lively contact with the government. In 1943 a famous doctor of Shiite theology, Haji Aga Hosein Quini, arrived *in* Teheran from Iraq. Qurai had been *persona r<sup>^</sup>n grata* under the old regime and was obliged to live in exile in Xajef and Karbela, the :wo Shiite centers of Iraq. Upon his arrival in the capital he was greeted enthusiastically by a number of clerical and lay dignitaries and was visited personally by Prime Minister Ali Soheily. The head of the Moslem hierarchy in Teheran, Malayeri, as well as several Grand Ulemas from the provinces were frequently received by the Shah.

Thus encouraged by the friendly official attitude, the Shia hierarchy did not hesitate to intensify and expand its activities. In 1942 a Society for the Propagation of Islam was founded with branches in all cities of Iran. Between 1942 and 1944 alone the Society published eleven large volumes of religious works totaling 60,000 copies. Its press organ was *Xur-i-Danesh* ("The Light of

Knowledge";, a richly illustrated periodical. Under the auspices of the society a new weekly entitled *Islam* began to appear in March, 1944.<sup>2</sup> Following this trend, in May, 1945, the daily paper *Vazife* inaugurated special weekly editions exclusively devoted to matters relating to the Mohammedan religion and ethics.

**The clergy also combated the Communist offensive vigorously. We have pointed out earlier the line Soviet propaganda adopted in the matter of religion. This propaganda trying to present the Soviet Union as a country of tolerance and freedom for all denominations**

<sup>2</sup> For details of the society's activity see *Islam*, March 25, 1944.